



Congressman Tim Ryan

Proudly Serving the People of Ohio's 17th District

Constituent Update

October 23, 2003

“Picture of the Week”

Taking Accountability in Iraq

This past Friday, October 17, 2003, the House of Representatives voted to pass a supplemental budget request of \$87 billion for U.S. reconstruction efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan—I have serious concerns with our direction in Iraq and voted against the request. I fully support any effort to secure the safe return of our many brave men and women serving in uniform. Yet, I could not vote for a request that left so many important questions unanswered and granted so much money to an overseas cause while our veterans, our seniors and our children are suffering here at home. Here are just a few of the questions unanswered by the President's request for \$87 billion.

How much is this going to cost? The President's request for \$87 billion in funding for Iraq and Afghanistan comes less than 5 months after Congress approved his initial request for more than \$60 billion for war and reconstruction efforts. With no solid plan for rebuilding post-war Iraq, \$87 billion is unlikely to cover all reconstruction needs and the U.S. may be further embroiling itself in a much greater long term investment. Before approving these funds, the U.S. must formulate and budget a realistic plan for rebuilding Iraq and bringing our troops home.

How will the \$87 billion be spent? Examining the President's request reveals outrageous costs, ranging from \$900 million to import petroleum products to the country with the world's second largest oil reserves to \$400 million to construct a prison at a cost of nearly \$50,000 a bed. Before Congress pledges such a large amount of money, assurances need to be made that this money will be used effectively.

How will the United States afford \$87 billion? Having approved a tax cut of more than \$550 billion dollars the federal budget is facing a more than \$4.2 trillion deficit. Every additional dollar that the U.S. government spends contributes to the national debt, and given interest rates, it is increasing at a rate of over \$1 million a minute. Before sending even more funds overseas, we need to seriously consider how we will pay for this. It is not fair simply to saddle our future generations with such enormous debt.

Do our troops have the resources that they need? While working to restore stability and rebuild Iraq, U.S. troops remain in harm's way without many crucial supplies. The Army lacks Kevlar body plates for 40,000 of its troops in Iraq; one-third of the 1st Armored Division's Bradley vehicles are unusable due to lack of spare tracks; and 40 percent of the division's Humvee vehicles are unusable due to a shortage of spare parts. Before asking our men and women to risk their lives indefinitely overseas, we must do whatever we can to protect them and give them the resources they need to get the job done.

Why aren't similar investments being made at home? While the President's request for \$87 Billion includes allowances for repairing utilities and infrastructure in Iraq, similar investments are not being made in the U.S. For example: the supplemental request includes more than \$6 Billion or \$255 per Iraqi citizen to repair and renovate the Iraqi powergrid, while in the wake of a massive power failure here at home, approximately \$.71 per citizen is being invested in renovating the U.S. power grid.



On Wednesday, October 15, Congressman Ryan hosted Daniel Colvin, a Kent State freshman and poet, as well as his family and mentors who traveled to DC from Youngstown, OH. They met to discuss many of the challenges that young people face in today's schools. (Pictured from left to right: Congressman Kendrick Meek (FL), Congressman Harold Ford, Jr. (TN), Daniel Colvin and Congressman Tim Ryan.)

We Can Help!

Over the past 8 months my staff and I have been working hard for the people of Ohio's 17th District. While we are unable to order federal agencies to decide a matter in your favor, we are happy to assist you with questions or problems that you might be encountering with the federal government and are often successful at getting you a prompt response. Here are some areas where we may be able to help:

- Social Security and Medicare Benefits
- Student Loans
- Veterans Benefits and Military Service Difficulties
- Disaster Assistance
- Small Business Loan Applications
- Naturalization and Citizenship
- FHA and VA home Loan Applications
- IRS problems
- Passports

You can also visit the ever-growing “*Constituent Services*” section of my website. <http://timryan.house.gov> The newly renovated passport section provides you with all of the forms and information you will need to order or renew your U.S. Passport, while the grants section will guide you in your search for federal funding. Also find information on visiting the Washington, DC area ordering a U.S. Flag or interning in my Ohio and Washington, D.C. offices.

Contact Congressman Tim Ryan ...<http://timryan.house.gov>

Washington Office: 222 Cannon House Office Bldg., Washington, DC 20515 202-225-5261 202-225-3719 (fax)

Warren Office: 197 West Market Street, Warren, OH 44481 330/373-0074 330/373-0098 (fax)

Youngstown Office: 241 Federal Plaza West, Youngstown, OH 44503 330/740-0193 330/740-0182 (fax)

Toll-Free: 1-800-856-4152